

What is claimed is:

1. A guidewire comprising:

an elongated inner core member including a proximal section and a distal section, the distal section including a proximal portion and a distal portion;

an elongated reinforcing member disposed about the proximal portion of the distal section such that the distal portion of the distal section is free of the reinforcing member; and

an outer member disposed about the distal section of the core member, there being no intervening layer of material between the distal portion of the distal section and the outer member.

2. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a nickel-titanium alloy.

3. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a nickel-titanium alloy tube having at least one cut or groove defined therein.

4. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a nickel-titanium alloy tube having at least one helical cut or groove defined along a length of the reinforcing member.

5. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a nickel-titanium alloy coil.

6. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the reinforcing member comprises at least one nickel-titanium wire helically wrapped about the proximal portion of the distal section.

7. The guidewire of claim 6, wherein the reinforcing member comprises at least a second nickel-titanium wire helically wrapped about the proximal portion of the distal section in an opposing direction.

8. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the distal portion of the distal section of the core member has a non-circular cross-section.

9. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the core member comprises stainless steel.

10. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the outer member comprises a coil.

11. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein the coil comprises stainless steel.

12. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein the outer member comprises a polymer.

13. A guidewire comprising:

an elongated inner core member, the core member having a proximal region and a distal region with at least a portion of the distal region including stainless steel, the distal region having a proximal section and a distal section;

an elongated reinforcing member including a nickel-titanium alloy disposed about the inner core member, the reinforcing member having a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the distal end terminates proximal of the distal section of the distal region of the core member; and

an outer member disposed over the distal section of the core member and at least a portion of the reinforcing member.

14. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the distal region of the core member is stainless steel.

15. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the proximal region of the core member has a diameter and the outer member has an outside diameter substantially equal to the diameter of the proximal region of the core member.

16. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the outer member comprises a stainless steel coil.

17. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the outer member comprises a polymer.

18. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a coil.

19. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a tube having at least one helical cut or groove defined along a length of the reinforcing member.

20. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein the reinforcing member comprises at least one wire helically wrapped about the proximal section of the distal region.

21. The guidewire of claim 20, wherein the reinforcing member comprises at least a second wire helically wrapped about the proximal section of the distal region in an opposing direction.

22. A guidewire comprising:

an elongated inner core member including stainless steel, the inner core member including a proximal portion having a first cross-sectional area, an intermediate portion having a second cross-sectional area, wherein the second cross-sectional area is less than the first cross-sectional area, and a distal portion having a ribbon profile;

an elongated reinforcing member including a nickel-titanium alloy, the reinforcing member being disposed about the intermediate portion of the inner core member; and

a spring tip including stainless steel, the spring tip extending over the distal portion of the inner core member and the reinforcing member.

23. The guidewire of claim 22, wherein at least a portion of the intermediate portion and the distal portion of the core member includes stainless steel.

24. The guidewire of claim 22, wherein the proximal portion of the core member has a diameter and the intermediate portion has a diameter less than the diameter of the proximal portion.

25. The guidewire of claim 24, wherein the spring tip has an outside diameter, wherein the outside diameter of the spring tip is substantially equal to the diameter of the proximal portion of the core member.

26. The guidewire of claim 22, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a tube having at least one helical cut or groove defined along a length of the reinforcing member.

27. The guidewire of claim 22, wherein the reinforcing member comprises a spring coil.

28. The guidewire of claim 22, wherein the reinforcing member comprises at least one wire helically wrapped about the intermediate portion of the core member.

29. The guidewire of claim 28, wherein the reinforcing member comprises at least a second wire helically wrapped about the intermediate portion of the core member in an opposing direction.